Middlebury Open the Books

This is the form to endorse the Middlebury Open the Books campaign. A letter explaining our platform and demands is below:

The Middlebury Open the Books Campaign is a coalition of students and employees calling for radical financial transparency at Middlebury College.

Other colleges and universities have already opened their books.
Carnegie Mellon's “Open the Books” Campaign in 2002 clarified that “an open books policy means that any interested member of the Carnegie Mellon community could gain access to portions of the actual budget of the University that are covered by the policy.” Their report cautions against an “ask and we’ll give it to you” policy, as that only paves the way for gatekeeping. Moreover, a 2016 AP article stated that “out of 50 public and private universities asked to disclose their investments, 39 schools with combined endowments of $255 billion refused to provide a single record.” In a great victory earlier this year, Rutgers University answered the calls of its students and employees when it released in-depth financial information regarding its restricted and unrestricted reserves, among other items.

Opening the books means institutions are accountable.
While the concept of “opening the books” began as a means of holding governments accountable -- and ensuring that a community’s money is spent to the maximum benefit of everyone -- the movement has been taken up by students and employees at colleges and universities around the United States. A college's board of trustees and their spending decisions critically shape the lives of every member of the community; therefore, we ask to be informed and involved in these financial decision making processes.

Lacking full transparency means the students and employees of Middlebury College are operating with an information deficit with regards to decisions of the Senior Leadership Group (SLG).

Due to the College’s 501(c) 3 status as a private nonprofit institution, its financial information – including that regarding the endowment – is not publicly available. Although the Middlebury SLG shares some records of the College's finances, they limit essential pieces of information. Access to details about Middlebury’s investments and revenue sources, and to general information about the endowment would provide an opportunity to gauge how the College allocates its budget. For example, how much does the college spend on mental health resources versus public safety? How many Middlebury essential workers are not earning a livable wage?

Because financial decision making profoundly impacts all of us, a broad array of financial information and data needs to be made available to the Middlebury College community. Only an understanding of what decisions are being made, and by whom, will allow us to determine whether our community’s values are being undermined or upheld.

Middlebury Open the Books is demanding the same accountability of our administration.

Following in the footsteps of Carnegie Mellon and Rutgers University, Middlebury Open the Books asks our administration:

Will Middlebury commit to making its financial decisions and records publicly accessible to our community?

If Middlebury opened the books, we would know:

-How the College's money is being spent.
-What kinds of cuts are being made to the College budget and the specific reasons informing that decision making process.

-How and where our endowment is invested.
-How much of the endowment is used to cover the costs of the College.
-How much of the endowment is in "undesignated funds."
-How much of the endowment can be reallocated from "designated funds" to be used to confront the current financial emergency.

-What the highest and lowest paid positions at the College are, including how many employees earn less than a livable wage and how many earn over $200,000 per year.
-Why the College has not addressed wage compression, i.e. why employees who have worked at the College for several years are earning the same wage as newly hired employees.
-How much money the College spends on Public Safety vs. mental health services vs. restorative/community-based justice practices.
-How exactly the money raised for the racial justice initiative will be spent.
-What are the line-by-line expenditures being spent by different College entities such as the athletics department, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, the Ralph Myhre Golf Course, etc.

Financial transparency is connected to social justice. Without knowing where our resources are spent, we cannot determine if we are working toward racial, economic, and other forms of justice in our community. Because of this fact, members of various organizations such as Students for Justice in Palestine, Cops off Campus, Concerned Students of Midd and the AAUP have joined together in this campaign.

Signed, Laurie Essig, President AAUP Middlebury (and many others)

Next

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside of Middlebury. Report Abuse

Google Forms